

State of Rhode Island
Department of Administration

OFFICE OF ACCOUNTS AND CONTROL

SECTION
Accounting

POLICY NUMBER
A-36

POLICY
**Payments for Coffee Breaks, Luncheons,
Dinner, Etc.**

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CATEGORY
Policy

AMENDMENT / REVISION

The following guidelines and policies will apply for all state employees and general officers:

1. The state will pay for coffee breaks, snacks and in-house breakfasts, lunches and dinners in the following situations:
 - 1.1 When non-public employees or board or commission members are asked to participate, without compensation by the state, in a meeting or discussion relating to an agency's plans, programs, policies, etc.
 - 1.2 For volunteers providing assistance to an agency. When called together for purposes of planning, implementation or award ceremonies (coffee or nonalcoholic beverage/snacks only).
 - 1.3 When an agency has a program for (1) the awarding of service pins, or (2) the introduction of a new department director only to staff (*coffee or nonalcoholic beverages/snacks only*).
 - 1.4 When agency employees are being recruited or solicited to support a state sponsored non-profit community service program, e.g. State Employees Combined Charitable Campaign (*coffee or nonalcoholic beverages/snacks only*).
 - 1.5 When employees are asked by an agency to attend an off-location all-day (or days) workshops, seminars, conferences, retreats, e.g. at URI or Alton Jones or RIC campus or elsewhere.
 - 1.6 When employees from other agencies are asked by an agency to attend an on-site workshop, seminar, conference, symposium (*coffee or nonalcoholic beverages/snacks only*).

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- 1.7 For meetings held by general officers and department directors or their designees with officers and directors of other states, other federal agencies and foreign governments. The general officer and/or department director is held responsible for certifying the payment voucher containing the reason for the meeting with the names and titles of all persons attending.
- 1.8 For meals and/or beverages served at meetings attended by general officers and department directors or their designees with anyone with a direct financial interest in a decision such officers or directors are authorized to make, either individually or in participation with others. The general officer or director should prepare a memorandum explaining the circumstances of consuming the meals and beverages including the amount claimed for reimbursement. No reimbursement will be made for alcoholic beverages. This policy applies to meals consumed before, during, or after the workday, outside of a state office (pursuant to Ethics Commission Regulation 36-14-5009).
- 1.9 For gifts of food, meals or beverages made to any employee who is authorized to make decisions concerning government operations or policy from anyone with a direct financial interest in the decision. This policy applies to gifts of food, meals, or beverages consumed before, during or after the workday, within or outside a state office.

The employee should prepare a memorandum explaining the circumstances of consuming the meals and/or beverages, including the amount claimed for reimbursement.

No reimbursement will be made for alcoholic beverages. If the employee can pay the dining facility directly for the food/beverages served to him/her, they should

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do so and obtain a receipt for reimbursement. If the employee is part of a group and the cost of the employee's serving cannot be readily calculated by the dining facility or the meal sponsor, the employee should pay the average cost per meal. An explanation of the calculation should be provided in the explanatory memorandum. (Pursuant to Ethics Commission Regulation 36-14-5009)

- 1.10 When a state-owned building, statue, park, land, etc. is dedicated for public use and the public is invited (*coffee or nonalcoholic beverages/snacks only*).
 - 1.11 For a ground-breaking ceremony related to the construction of a public facility or infrastructure where the public is invited (*coffee or nonalcoholic beverages/snacks only*).
 - 1.12 For the unveiling of official portraits of any Governor, Associate Justice, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, or other General Officer or public official, to which the public is invited (*coffee or nonalcoholic beverages/snacks only*).
 - 1.13 When an employee(s) is(are) invited to attend a meeting of a non-profit or community organization, i.e. an annual dinner meeting, a luncheon or dinner meeting to present awards, etc.
2. The state **will NOT** pay for coffee breaks, snacks, breakfast, lunches, or dinners in the following instances:
- 2.1 When employees or board or commission members, who receive compensation from the state, meet on a regularly scheduled basis for the purpose of conducting state business.

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- 2.2 When employees are participating in personal improvement education or training programs on company time, or when such employees are so participating on their own time, but with in-service training credits being an outcome.
- 2.3 When employees of an agency are having a leaving-for-other-service, retirement, or going-away, or other testimonial occasion for another employee.
3. The state will not pay for the purchase and/or consumption of any alcoholic beverages, including "non-alcoholic" (low alcohol content) beverages. (Exceptions: alcoholic beverages purchased for laboratory tests as well as alcoholic beverages [beer and wine only] purchased for individuals under state care, based on a doctor's prescription.)
4. In consideration of these guidelines and policies, one's interpretation should be on a strict, rather than loose, construction basis; and, obviously, the objective should not be to rationalize ways and means for circumvention.

The above policies and guidelines do not apply to the Legislative Branch.